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SNAPSHOT Medicine for Misprescription

USAID worked with the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital to improve patient care



Photo by SPS staff

Dr. Sayed Afandi, Medical Director of the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital, reviews pharmacy records with Pharmacist Ziaulhaq.

The Drug and Therapeutics Committee at the Jalalabad Public Health Hospital established a formulary of 206 medicines from which all doctors now prescribe, knowing they will be available.

The 520-bed Jalalabad Public Health Hospital in Nangarhar Province is large and exceptionally busy with an average of 40,000 to 50,000 outpatients and 1,700 baby deliveries per month. “For these reasons, hospital staff members were not enthusiastic about having to attend another meeting,” said Medical Director Dr. Sayed Afandi. But in October 2009, a Drug and Therapeutics Committee was established at this busy hospital and staff attitudes began to change.

With the goal of improving medicine use and health outcomes, drug and therapeutics committees are made up of hospital administrators, physicians, and pharmacists. At Jalalabad Hospital, the committee meets monthly to discuss medicine use, treatment for illnesses, and pharmacy operation. USAID provides technical assistance to the Jalalabad Drug and Therapeutics Committee as well as others throughout the country.

The committee carried out a medicine-use study and found that hospital doctors were prescribing nearly 700 different medicines and providing widely different drug treatments to patients with the same diagnoses. Doctors also never knew if the medicine they prescribed would be available in the hospital pharmacy, which aggravated the problem. In response, the committee developed a formulary that listed 206 drugs most appropriate to hospital and patient needs, and assisted the hospital pharmacy in reorganizing to make sure these 206 medicines were always stocked so that doctors now prescribe from this list with confidence.

The committee recently started work on treatment guidelines. These will standardize the treatment that patients receive and provide guidance for the doctors as they prescribe. “As a result of the work of the committee, our doctors and pharmacists are working together to make sure all our patients receive the correct treatment for their illnesses,” Dr. Afandi reports. “This has greatly improved our overall patient care.”

USAID works with the Ministry of Public Health to improve governance in the pharmaceutical sector, strengthen pharmaceutical management systems, contain the emergence and spread of anti-microbial resistance, and expand access to and use of medicine.